

CLAIMS

1. An illumination control system for endoscopes comprising:

a memory in which at least a set value of a light regulation level for light emanating from a light source is stored among various set values determined as various operational conditions for use of an endoscope system;

a reader for when the driving power supply of the endoscope system is turned on again in order to reuse the endoscope system, reading at least the set value of the light regulation level among the set values previously determined as the operational conditions and stored in the memory;

a comparator for comparing the previously determined set value of the light regulation level read by the reader with a predetermined threshold value; and

a light level setting unit for: when the result of the comparison performed by the comparator demonstrates that the previously determined set value of the light regulation level is equal to or larger than the predetermined threshold value, setting the light regulation level for light emanating from the light source to a predetermined value; and when the previously determined set value of the light regulation level is equal to or smaller than the predetermined threshold value, setting the light regulation

level for light emanating from the light source to the previously determined set value of the light regulation level.

2. An illumination control system for endoscopes according to Claim 1, further comprising a regulator for regulating the light regulation level for light emanating from the light source.

3. An illumination control system for endoscopes according to Claim 2, wherein the regulator includes a first regulator enabling manual regulation of the light regulation level and a second regulator enabling automatic regulation of the light regulation level.

4. An illumination control system for endoscopes according to Claim 3, wherein when the previously determined set value of an amount of light is a value determined by the second light level regulator, the comparator adopts a first predetermined value determined based on a distance to an object and an amount of light.

5. An illumination control system for endoscopes according to Claim 3, wherein when the previously determined set value of an amount of light is a value determined by the first light level regulator, the comparator adopts a value determined based on the angle of aperture blades included in a diaphragm.

6. An illumination control system for endoscopes

according to Claim 3, wherein when the previously determined set value of an amount of light is a value determined by the first light level regulator, the comparator cancels manual light regulation that is previously determined and adopts a predetermined value of an automatic light regulation level.

7. An illumination control system for endoscopes according to Claim 1, wherein when the driving power supply of the endoscope system is turned on again, a normal filter that passes illumination light emanating from the light source as it is is disposed on a light path irrespective of which of various optical filters included in a turret has been used previously.

8. An illumination control system for endoscopes according to Claim 7, wherein the various optical filters include an infrared filter.

9. An illumination control system for endoscopes according to Claim 1, wherein when the driving power supply of the endoscope system is turned off, the set values determined as various operational conditions for use of the endoscope system are cleared, and the operational conditions are set to predetermined values.

10. An illumination control system for endoscopes according to Claim 1, wherein the threshold value is equal to or smaller than a heating limiting value, the threshold value being compared with the previously determined set

value of the light regulation level by the comparator.

11. An illumination control system for endoscopes according to Claim 2, wherein the regulator for regulating the light regulation level for light emanating from the light source drives or controls a diaphragm located on the path of illumination light.

12. An illumination control system for endoscopes according to Claim 2, wherein the regulator for regulating the light regulation level for light emanating from the light source disposes a light reduction filter on the path of illumination light so as to supply a predetermined amount of light.

13. An illumination control system for endoscopes according to Claim 2, wherein the regulator for regulating the light regulation level for light emanating from the light source controls a lighting current which lights the light source of illumination light.

14. An illumination control method for endoscopes comprising:

a storing step of storing in a memory at least a set value of a light regulation level for light emanating from a light source among various set values determined as various operational conditions for use of an endoscope system;

a reading step of when the driving power supply of the endoscope system is turned on again in order to reuse the

endoscope system, reading at least the set value of the light regulation level among the set values previously determined as the operational conditions and stored in the memory;

a comparing step of comparing the previously determined set value of the light regulation level read at the reading step with a predetermined threshold value; and

a light level setting step of: when the result of the comparison performed at the comparing step demonstrates that the previously determined set value of the light regulation level is equal to or larger than the predetermined threshold value, setting the light regulation level for light emanating from the light source to a predetermined value; and when the previously determined set value of the light regulation level is equal to or smaller than the threshold value, setting the light regulation level for light emanating from the light source to the previously determined set value of the light regulation level.

15. An illumination control method for endoscopes according to Claim 14, further comprising a regulating step of regulating the light regulation level for light emanating from the light source, wherein:

the regulating step includes a first regulating step enabling manual regulation of the light regulation level and a second regulating step of enabling automatic regulation of

the light regulation level.

16. An illumination control method for endoscopes comprising the steps of:

storing in a memory at least a set value of a light regulation level for light emanating from a light source among various set values determined as various operational conditions for use of an endoscope system;

when the driving power supply of the endoscope system is turned on again in order to reuse the endoscope system, reading at least the set value of the light regulation level among the set values previously determined as the operational conditions and stored in the memory;

comparing the read and previously determined set value of the light regulation level with a predetermined threshold value;

when the result of the comparison demonstrates that the previously determined set value of the light regulation level is equal to or larger than the predetermined threshold value, setting the light regulation level for light emanating from the light source to a predetermined value; and when the previously determined set value of the light regulation level is equal to or smaller than the threshold value, setting the light regulation level for light emanating from the light source to the previously determined set value of the light regulation level.